

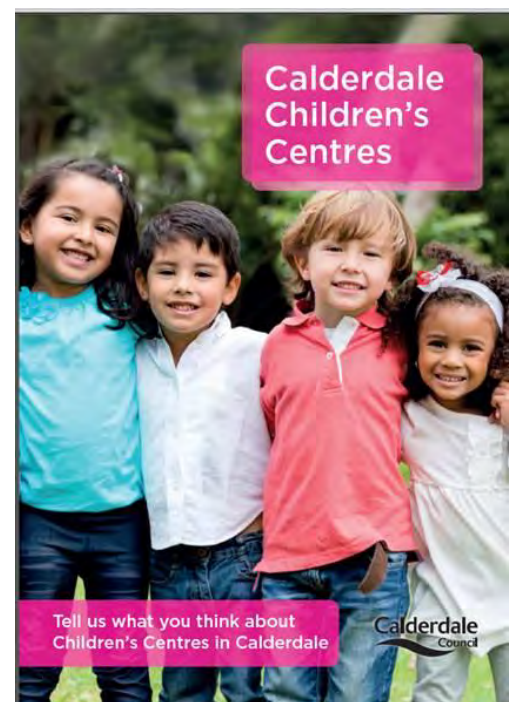
The Future of Calderdale's Children's Centre Services

Public consultation report

July 2018

Calderdale Council

"I genuinely feel that the children's centres have made me a better parent. I have learnt lots of new skills which I have shared with my children. The high level of support for parents has always made me feel like I could speak to staff about any concerns I had. They are like a second family to me. Their welcoming non-judgemental attitude helps support a range of families. Families of all income levels and backgrounds need their support when learning to be a good parent. I cannot recommend them enough. They are a lifeline to many and support parents to help create the next generation."



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“I feel part of my local community I make new friends and feel supported by my children's centre. I know the children's centre will never turn me away when I need support and there are so many options available dependent upon what needs I have at the time.”

“The service is not consistent from centre to centre. Different advice is given from different health professionals at different clinics which is conflicting and confusing. I’ve not even seen some of the services mentioned”

“Contact with professionals for free. It avoided us going to the GP or to A&E.”

“To continue offering services the community want, without overlapping with what is already offered in the community. Could be seen to be supporting existing groups which may be struggling to keep running as lack of resources, etc.”

Introduction

Our Vision

Our vision is that all children in Calderdale are happy, healthy, safe, and successful and Calderdale is a child-friendly borough and all children in Calderdale will:

- ✓ Start healthy and stay healthy.
- ✓ Be safe at home, in school and in the community.
- ✓ Enjoy learning and achieve their best.
- ✓ Develop social skills and take part in activities.

Background

Children's Centre Services support families from pregnancy until a child reaches five years of age. They work with local midwives, GP's, health visitors, nurseries and community groups to make sure families get the support they need. Children's centre services provide early year's education and childcare, health services and family support.

Calderdale's Children's Centre Services are a valued resource for our communities supporting just over 5000 children aged up to five years and their families across the borough.

It is an important service and one that the council wants to protect. In light of the on-going funding cuts from central Government, the council has had to look at how the service is delivered across the borough to ensure it can operate within the budget available, whilst maintaining the most valued services and support.

In 2016, the council carried out a consultation with the people using the services and what support and facilities they most valued. The overwhelming clear message from almost everyone we spoke to was the Children's Centre Services work really well for lots of families, and people don't want to see change for change's sake. They told us Children's Centre Services are supportive and friendly, provide places where people feel safe and are not judgemental and where families feel there are people they trust

The next step in the process of making the necessary savings whilst maintaining the same standard of service delivery is to look at how and where these valued services should be delivered. We are reviewing the physical buildings and locations used across the borough, many of which are expensive to run and potentially looking at re-locating some services so they are more conveniently situated for families and can delivery more outreach support in local communities.

To do this, we wanted as many views as possible to ensure we can shape a service that meets the needs of young children and their families.

Consultation overview

Calderdale Council undertook a public consultation between 29th May and 26th June 2018 through an online and paper questionnaire and respondents were invited to comment to help shape the future of Children's Centre services in Calderdale.

The questionnaire elicited 1036 responses, of which 65% were from parents/carers, 25% from Children Centre staff. Please note that not all questions were answered by all respondents and

some questions allowed multiple answers to be selected, therefore the base number for each question may vary.

Free text (comments) analysis methodology

For the purposes of analysis, comments have been grouped into themes. The number of respondents for each theme may not correspond with the total number of comments received for each response. This is because one comment may have flagged several issues.

Comments grouped within 'other' are those which do not fit into any general theme or were not frequent enough to warrant their own theme. A full list of the comments is available separately on request.

Respondent Profile

The following tables illustrate the profile of those who responded to the questionnaire. Please note total number of responses maybe higher than the number of people who responded due to them being able to select more than one answer option. We also gave the option for the survey to be completed more than once, for example as a parent and then as a professional as we recognise some staff also access the centres as families.

The majority of those who responded to the questionnaire are parent's carer or family member (65%) followed by Children's centre staff, volunteer or advisory board member (25%) a small number of responses came from other professionals (5%) and members of the public (2%). Respondents were most likely to have children aged between 0 and 5 years olds.

The role in which you are completing this survey	No. of responses	% of responses
Parent (including expectant parent), carer or family member	674	65%
Children's centre staff, volunteer or advisory board member	260	25%
Professional	55	5%
Member of public	20	2%
Calderdale Council Member or employee	13	2%
Other	7	1%
Current provider	6	1%

How many children do you have in each of the age group (parents/carers only)	No. of responses	% of responses
Up to and including 5 years	627	59%
Age 6 to 11 years	272	25%
Age 12 years and over	171	16%

Do you have a caring responsibility for a child with special educational needs or disability (parents/carers only)	No. of responses	% of responses
Yes	89	8.5%

“It is important they are reflective of the needs of the diverse communities they serve”

Current use of Children's Centres

The chart below shows the Children's Centres most commonly used by those who responded to the consultation questionnaire only. This is not necessarily representative of the use of Children's Centres more generally across Calderdale.

Which Children's Centre services have you accessed in the past twelve months? <i>All that applies.</i>	No. of responses	% of responses
Elland Children's Centre	56	5%
Field Lane Children's Centre, Rastrick	58	6%
Holywell Green Children's Centre Hub	13	1%
Wellholme Park Children's Centre, Brighouse	67	6%
Ash Green Children's Centre, Mixenden	47	5%
Creations Community Children's Centre, Pellon	52	5%
Illingworth Community Children's Centre	43	4%
Innovations Children's Centre, Cousin Lane, Ovenden	116	11%
Kevin Pearce Children's Centre, Ovenden Rd	88	8%
Northowram and Shelf Children's Centre Hub, Lydgate	9	1%
Hebden Vale Outreach Children's Centre Services	41	4%
Todmorden Children's Centre	126	12%
New Road Children's Centre, Sowerby	70	7%
Jubilee Children's Centre	114	11%
Jubilee Children's Centre at Beech Hill	35	3%
Little Stars Children's Centre	81	8%
Little Stars Children's Centre	6	1%
Sunshine Children's Centre, Mount Pellon J & I School	24	2%
Boothtown Children's Centre	52	5%
Siddal Children's Centre, Siddal Primary School	51	5%
Southowram Children's Centre	34	3%
None	24	2%

“Make it easy for parents to access any children's centre anywhere in the area. At the moment there is huge variability in what is provided and parents are discouraged from attending services if ... not where they live”

Those who responded to the questionnaire say they most commonly visit a Children's Centre

On average how often have you accessed the following provided by Children's' Centre services	Weekly	Monthly	Once every 3 months	Once every 6 months	Once every 12 months	Never used
Antenatal Clinic / Group / Support	38	103	43	16	57	163
Baby weaning & Child Healthy Eating advice	18	33	19	34	67	204
Baby Clinic / Group	105	90	48	21	42	118
Baby Massage/Baby Yoga	81	32	20	17	54	199
Breastfeeding Support/Group	50	32	19	16	29	224
Coffee Mornings/ Afternoons	36	31	18	7	18	241
Cookery/ Food safety/ Healthy eating	17	16	11	15	21	264
Chatty Monkeys / Toddler Talk / Speech and Language Support	17	16	9	13	18	262
Childminder Network Group	4	7	1	2	4	301
Dad's Group /Support/Event	12	13	12	8	12	273
Day Care / Nursery	238	5	5	5	11	190
Employment/work group/support	12	9	7	8	13	285
Family Support	92	15	15	7	20	233
Group Activity	94	30	28	21	13	200
Friends groups/Activity/ Event	71	18	27	8	16	226
ESOL - English for Speakers of Other Languages	5	3	5	1	3	304
Holiday club/group/ activity	29	22	53	20	14	225
Getting Ready for Baby	19	8	8	1	22	270
Parenting advice and support	45	31	15	11	27	225
Parenting group, activity or course	61	23	23	13	20	222
Midwife	56	109	38	14	61	133
Health Visitor	53	110	67	27	47	112
Postnatal Clinic	20	45	28	11	24	215
School readiness/ transitions activities	11	11	7	7	17	282
Special Educational Needs and Disability support (SEND)	16	6	4	4	6	288
Stay and Play	180	61	34	10	20	145
Twins & Multiple Births Group	11	7	1	1	2	308
Volunteering	15	9	4	3	9	293
Young Parents Group/Support	15	8	0	0	10	297

The importance of current services

Those who responded to the questionnaire said the following services were most important

Most important services 'For My child'	No. of responses	% of responses	Most important services 'For Me'	No. of responses	% of responses
Antenatal Clinic / Group / Support	269	53%	Antenatal Clinic / Group / Support	270	54%
Baby weaning & Child Healthy Eating advice	208	42%	Baby weaning & Child Healthy Eating advice	209	44%
Baby Clinic / Group	297	58%	Baby Clinic / Group	283	57%
Baby Massage/Baby Yoga	187	38%	Baby Massage/Baby Yoga	192	40%
Breastfeeding Support/Group	215	45%	Breastfeeding Support/Group	215	46%
Coffee Mornings/ Afternoons	139	30%	Coffee Mornings/ Afternoons	165	36%
Cookery/ Food safety/ Healthy eating	134	29%	Cookery/ Food safety/ Healthy eating	140	31%
Chatty Monkeys / Toddler Talk / Speech and Language Support	185	40%	Chatty Monkeys/Toddler Talk /Speech & Language Support	169	37%
Dad's Group /Support/Event	142	31%	Childminder Network Group	111	25%
Day Care / Nursey	332	61%	Dad's Group /Support/Event	140	31%
Family Support / Group/ Activity	249	49%	Day Care / Nursey	323	61%
Friends groups/Activity/ Event	205	43%	Employment/work group/support	145	32%
Holiday club/group/ activity	209	42%	Family Support	224	46%
Parenting advice/support/ group/ activity	236	48%	Group/ Activity	199	43%
Midwife	298	60%	Friends groups/Activity/ Event	194	41%
Health Visitor	314	62%	ESOL - English for Speakers of Other Languages	120	27%
Postnatal Clinic	230	50%	Holiday club/group/ activity	189	41%
School readiness/ transitions activities	208	44%	Getting Ready for Baby	147	33%
Stay and Play	308	58%	Parenting advice/support/ group/ activity	209	44%
Twins & Multiple Births Group	113	25%	Midwife	292	60%
			Health Visitor	321	64%
			Postnatal Clinic	242	53%
			School readiness/ transitions activities	200	44%
			Stay and Play	278	55%
			Twins & Multiple Births Group	113	26%
			Volunteering	126	28%
			Young Parents Group/Support	135	30%

“Learning new skills will help him develop in life and for him to be more independent. Helps us understand how he should develop. Good to show other families are the same but different”

Why are the services important 'For My child'	No. of responses	% of responses
My child's physical and mental development	535	25%
Learning new skills	506	24%
Contact with other families	414	20%
Contact with professionals	371	17%
Information and advice	297	14%
Why are the services important 'For Me'		
My child's physical and mental development	377	19%
Learning new skills	342	17%
Contact with other families	427	21%
Contact with professionals	444	22%
Information and advice	408	20%

As well as comments relating to the 5 areas identified within the survey (Child development; Learning new skills; Contact with other families; Contact with professionals; Information and advice), the following key areas were also identified within comments as being reasons why services were important to the child or children or to the respondent:

- Having a place to rely on.
- The parent/ carer being able to go to work or to study.
- The parent/ carer being able to spend time on their mental and physical health and wellbeing.

In addition, some comments indicated that children's centres had played an important role in supporting respondents through traumatic times or times of crisis and had enabled positive family contact visits to take place.

The importance of future services

Those who responded to the questionnaire said the following services were most important to them in the future.

Most important Children's Centre Services in the future	No. of responses	% of responses
Having access to people with the right skills to support me and my child	862	84%
Being able to meet other parents and families	650	63%
Opportunity for my child to interact with other children	818	80%
Activities to meet mine and my child's needs	771	75%
Service in my local community	762	74%
A fixed location for services to be delivered from	711	69%

“An outcome based service that allows for innovation, adaptation and flexibility to meet the requirements of families and children”

“More weekend activities and support for families who work”

“The services which are on offer need to be advertised more, it wasn't till my baby was 4months old until I heard about the children's centres.”

As well as comments relating to the 6 key areas the following themes were identified within comments as being most important for Children's Centres in the future:

- Services being easy to contact, accessible and available.
- Available more at weekends and during school holidays.
- Working with the most vulnerable families.
- Sufficiently funded or innovative and flexible with the funding available.
- A variety of services and professionals working together.
- Consistency in the offer regardless of area.
- Reflective of the local community.

There were a number of areas where it was felt improvement could be made, but the key themes that were most prevalent were:

- Improvement of advertising, sharing of information about the services and general communication and a better booking system for events and courses.
- More events, activities and courses.
- Extending opening hours and ensuring more is available at weekends and during school holidays.
- Ensuring that the staff team are consistent, friendly, approachable and professional.

Any other comments

Those who responded were asked to provide any other comments and provided the following, mainly positive, themes;

- The service being of high value to both individuals and the community and positive experiences of the activities and groups.
- The service contributing to improved development and behaviour and children thriving through their interaction with the service.

In addition, some comments indicated that the service had contributed to improved mental wellbeing and created positive change for families. There were a small amount of negative comments which centred around lack of communication, be that with staff, or marketing of services.

“I would like to say that the Children's centres have been a great source of help for me and my children. When I moved back to the country it was a way for me to meet new people and got my child to be interact with other children. My midwife appointments were all at the children centre and this was very invaluable. All the support and hard work from the staff at the centres and the nurseries is fantastic. My older child thrived in nursery and I have put the youngest ones names down. All the services offered and the support and information has been an amazing help to both my children and myself”

Demographic Profile

The following tables present the findings from all respondents who completed the questions.

Role in which completing this survey	No. of responses	% of responses
Parent	674	65%
Professional	55	5%
Member of public	20	2%
CC Staff	260	25%
CMBC Staff	13	1%
Current provider	6	1%
Other	3	<1%

Gender	No. of responses	% of responses
Male	60	6%
Female	899	87%
Prefer not to say	15	7%

Age	No. of responses	% of responses
Under 25	91	9%
25 - 34	346	34%
35 - 44	232	22%
45 - 54	60	6%
55 - 64	18	2%
65+	3	<1%
Prefer not to say	158	15%

Ethnic Origin described	No. of responses	% of responses
White British	650	63%
White & Black Caribbean	8	1%
White & Black Asian	1	<1%
White & Black African	1	<1%
White Irish	4	<1%
Pakistani	57	6%
Indian	5	1%
Black – Caribbean	1	<1%
Black – African	7	1%
Bangladeshi	2	<1%
Any other White background	29	3%
Any other mixed background	3	<1%
Any other Asian background	7	1%
Other	6	1%